

Boltwood - Stockbridge House  
On University of Massachusetts campus,  
At North edge of Amherst  
Amherst  
Hampshire County  
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-636

HABS  
MASS  
8-AM  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BOLTWOOD - STOCKBRIDGE HOUSE

HABS No. MASS-636

Location: On University of Massachusetts campus, at north edge of Amherst, Amherst, Hampshire County, Massachusetts.

Present Owner: State University of Massachusetts.

Present Occupant: Faculty Club, University of Massachusetts.

Present Use: Club house.

Brief Statement of Significance: The oldest house in Amherst. Home of Presidents Henry Flagg French (1865) and Levi Stockbridge (1867-1892) of Massachusetts Agricultural College (now University of Massachusetts).

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## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Samuel Boltwood. John Field, his son-in-law, became owner in 1750. Nehemiah Strong acquired property through foreclosure after the Revolution but before 1794, when he deeded it to Elijah Hastings. Deeded to Levi Cowls in 1812; to Chester Cowls in 1834. Sold to Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1864. See: Charles Hiram Thayer, History of the Stockbridge House at Massachusetts State College (brochure); also, Charles Hiram Thayer, Stockbridge House, M.S.C., (small mimeographed booklet) 7.
2. Date of erection: c. 1728.
3. Notes on alterations and additions: Restoration, 1934-1936. Replaced floor joists and foundation generally. Removed partitions from lean-to portion. Removed partition in Northwest wing to make lounge. Removed several fireplaces and put in storage closets. Removed partition on second floor between two south rooms, making them one room. Installed new paneling where necessary, installed replicas of the old hardware where necessary. Finished off space in sheds at south, and modernized kitchen. Installed steam heating, electric wiring and fixtures. See: Charles Hiram Thayer, History of the Stockbridge House at Massachusetts State College 7.
4. Important old views: In Stockbridge House: (a) One large undated photograph of exterior before restoration--possibly taken in the 1920's. (b) Five photographs of the exterior taken during restoration, 1934-1936.

5. Sources of Information: Charles Hiram Thayer, History of the Stockbridge House at Massachusetts State College, (brochure) Published under the auspices of the Faculty Club, April 1936, Amherst, Mass., page 5 ff. In the Boltwood Room of the Jones Library, Amherst, Massachusetts. (One copy donated to the National Park Service by Mrs. L.A. Price, Stockbridge House).  
Charles Hiram Thayer, Stockbridge House, M.S.C., (small mimeographed booklet), Amherst, 1935. In Boltwood Room of the Jones Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.  
Interview with Mrs. L. A. Price, Stockbridge House, Amherst, Massachusetts., on August 30, 1959.
- B. Historical Events Connected with Structure: Was the residence of early presidents of Massachusetts Agricultural College at its beginnings in the 1860's, and the center of its activities, including early agricultural experiments.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect  
National Park Service

August 1959

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: Considered the oldest house in Amherst. A representative "salt-box" type. Contains some fine interior paneling.
2. Condition of Fabric: Very Good. Restored in 1934-1936, and well maintained.

### B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Two stories. Main section (approx. 35' x 35'), lean-to, and two wings.
2. Foundations: Fairly low; rubble stone.
3. Wall construction: Heavy hewn timber frame. Clapboards.
4. Chimneys: Central chimney, rebuilt. Stone foundation of old chimney can be seen in basement.
5. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: Main doorway solid 6-panel; very simple trim.

- b. Windows and shutters: Windows 12/12 double hung sash, 6" x 8" lights. A few sash said to be original. Louvred shutters outside. Two front windows of south first-floor room have sliding shutters inside.

6. Roof

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof. Slate covering laid over older wooden shingles.
- b. Framing: Heavy hewn timber principal rafters and purlins. Pole rafters widely spaced with very wide board sheathing.
- c. Cornice, eaves: Simple moulded wood cornice on main section, returned at gable ends. Simple moulding along gables.
- d. Dormers: None.

C. Technical Description of Interiors

- 1. Floor Plan: Rectangular 5-bay main section. Small entrance vestibule and stair; one principal room each side. Lean-to along whole width at rear, now one single room but once partitioned off into three rooms. Summer-kitchen wing extends back from south end, now remodelled. Wing extends back at northwest corner, now a single room, but was once partitioned off into two rooms.
- 2. Stairways: Small, steep, three-flight. Square newel posts, moulded rail. Square balusters set diagonally in plan.
- 3. Floor: One second-floor room retains old wide boards; others have been covered with modern hardwood flooring.
- 4. Floor framing: Hewn summer beams in several rooms; other parts of framing largely replaced.
- 5. Wall and ceiling finish:
  - a. Vertical boarding, first floor stair hall; original, very wide.
  - b. Horizontal, very wide moulded boards in lean-to; some original, others have been replaced.
  - c. South parlor has wood paneled wainscot, plaster above.
  - d. Some walls of second floor, wood paneled, with mouldings.
  - e. Other walls modern plaster, with wood base moulding and chair rail.

- f. Some ceilings underside of floor, exposed.
- g. Some ceilings modern plaster.
- 6. Doorways and doors: 4-panel. One plank door.
- 7. Trim: Door and window trim moulded wood. Some wood chair rails. North parlor has fireplace with pilasters and mantel shelf.
- 8. Hardware: A few pieces are old, others modern replicas. Wrought iron strap hinges and thumb latches.
- 9. Lighting: Electric. No old fixtures.
- 10. Heating: Originally fireplaces; most of them now removed. Steam central system now.

D. Site

- 1. General setting and orientation: Situate on campus of the University of Massachusetts, which has grown up around this former farmhouse. Front faces east.
- 2. Enclosures: Open.
- 3. Walks: Modern black-top to front and side doors.
- 4. Landscaping: West terrace between wings is modern.

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